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1

it all started with one taste.

2

i was patrolling when we came across the corpse of a rogue.

3

the others trusted me to wait while they got someone to help bury it.

4

i was really hungry.

5

i watched flies buzz around the corpse. it looked like an oversized squirrel...

6

making sure i was alone, i leaned down and took a bite from its flank.

7

at first i was disgusted at myself, but i was too hungry to resist.

8

i closed my eyes tight and chewed.

9

it tasted *good.*

10

i couldn't help myself.

11

i kept gnawing away at the corpse until there was a sizeable chunk of flesh missing.

12

i panicked when i noticed what i'd done. the patrol would notice!

13

i flipped it over, glancing around the forest. they weren't anywhere nearby yet. good.

14

i cleared the blood from my face and waited.

15

when they did get back, they asked why it'd moved.

16

i told them i got curious and flipped it over.

17

they believed me. im a good liar, and i dont think they cared too much anyway.

18

the next moon was normal. clan life went on, but i kept dreaming of that day.

19

i tried chewing on my paw, but it hurt too much.

20

damn nerves.

21

during a play-fight with my brother, falconpaw, a kit ran into me and made me loose.

22

the kit's name is seedkit. she's the runt of thistletooth's litter.

23

seedkit's always getting under everyone's paws. i don't even think thistletooth cares about her anymore.

24

i got an idea.

25

that night, i woke up seedkit and carefully led her out of camp. i told her there was a field of fireflies i wanted her to see.

26

i wasn't exactly lying.

27

we got to the field around moonhigh. it was at the edge of shadowclan's territory, full of countless fireflies.

28

seedkit ran out into the long grass and started chasing them.

29

i followed her, but slower, savoring the beauty of the field.

30

when i caught up to seedkit, she had a firefly trapped beneath her paws.

31

i slammed my paw down on her back, setting the poor insect free.

32

seedkit immediately began wailing.

33

fearful someone would hear and find me, i quickly snapped her neck.

34

the snap sent a chill down my spine.

35

but then i remembered the taste of the rogue and smiled slightly.

36

i removed my paw and crouched next to seedkit's limp body, eyes trailing over her still kit-fuzzy fur.

37

then i took a bite out of her side.

38

her body was much smaller than the rogue's, so i quickly reached her organs.

39

i hadn't tried organs before.

40

i slowly took a bite from her stomach.

41

the lining tasted alright, but i grunted at the foul, hot liquid inside.

42

i decided to avoid the stomach after that.

43

instead, i pushed her ribs until they snapped then tore them out, revealing her heart and lungs.

44

i first tried the lungs. not amazing, but i'd eat them more if i had to.

45

i decided to skip her heart. it looked too small for even a bird to enjoy.

49

i noticed her eyes, still open, but dull.

50

i used my claws to pop them from their sockets. it was incredibly disturbing, seeing them just... laying there.

51

i took one in my mouth, ripping it from the cord that ran further into her head, swallowing the eye whole. it was soft and squishy.

52

i decided to chew the other one, but the fluid inside was bitter so i swallowed it quick.

54

i decided to kick dirt over seedkit's mangled corpse, burying it like freshly caught prey.

55

in a way, that's what it was. prey.

56

i admired the fireflies buzzing around me before grooming my pelt, cleaning my maw and heading back to camp.

57

i curled up in my nest with a small smile.

58

i saw thistletooth, distraught and panicking, searching for her lost kit while i was leaving camp to train.

59

i guess she did care about seedkit.

60

five days passed, life going on. thistletooth hardly left the nursery, consumed by grief. her kittens had to be nursed by another queen.

61

as weird as it was, i missed the taste of flesh.

62

none of the usual prey we caught matched it.

63

nothing gave me the same satisfaction.

64

two kits were made apprentices, fawnpaw and thicketpaw, and three apprentices were made warriors; hornetclaw, fernsplash and molewhisker.

65

while training with my sister, ashpaw, i bit her tail to yank her off my back. i accidentally bit too deep and drew blood.

66

she shrieked and my mentor, pinefoot, scolded me.

67

but i didn't hear anything he said.

68

i was busy savoring the taste of blood on my tongue.

69

it reminded me of the rogue and seedkit.

70

we went back to camp and i was put on elder duties for three days.

71

i was confused as to why nettlestar gave me such a harsh punishment, but i didn't voice my opinions.

72

after the first day i already missed training.

73

i was also still craving flesh.

74

when i wasn't helping the elders i sat around camp, eating every item of prey i could find.

75

i was gaining weight, but i didn't care.

76

i just wanted to get some relief from the gnawing hunger.

77

when i was let off elder duties, i was slow in training. my now-overweight body tired out far too fast.

78

i had trouble focusing, too.

79

after a while, i gave up.

80

i asked fawnpaw to go for a walk as soon as everyone else had fallen asleep.

81

i brought her to the same field, but i didn't let her chase the fireflies first. i pinned her and snapped her neck the moment we arrived.

82

i made quite a racket tearing open her body and digging into her flesh and organs.

83

my muscles relaxed the second i began eating.

84

by the time i was done, it was nearing moonhigh. her body was a mess, fur and muscle torn, almost hollow.

85

blood was smeared across my face, my pelt a mess. but before i could clean myself up, i had to dispose of fawnpaw's remains.

86

i dug a deep hole then threw the rest of her body into it, covering her with dirt and grass.

87

then i went to the nearest stream and waded in, washing the blood from my short fur. i dried myself before returning to camp.

somebody was awake.

89

it was hornetclaw.

90

he asked why i was out of camp.

91

i told him i couldn't get to sleep so i went for a walk.

92

i asked what he was doing before he could reply.

93

hornetclaw explained he had be woken up to find a thorn stuck in his side, so he went to see the medicine cat, cypressfur. then he gave me an odd look and went to his den.

94

i went to mine and fell asleep.

95

i woke up to the sound of nettlestar calling a clan meeting. i groomed my pelt then hurried to join everyone.

96

it was about the disappearances.

97

i kept deadly still while he told everyone extra patrols would be assigned along with one to search for seedkit and fawnpaw.

98

then he said three new warriors would be made.

99

he called on falconpaw, ashpaw and i.

100

pride and excitement burned beneath my pelt as we were named falconstrike, ashclaw and darkcloud.

101

as the clan cheered our names, i turned to look at the crowd.

among them were our mentors, friends, and parents.

103

my father, crowsplash, wasn't cheering.

104

his eyes held a mix of horror and confusion.

105

they were fixed on me. it made me shiver.

106

when the meeting was dismissed, he asked to see me out of camp. i agreed and left.

107

he brought me to the field.

108

it disturbed me to see it, knowing very well my past victims were buried just tail-lengths away.

109

"i know what you did."

110

he caught me off guard.

111

my blood ran cold as i whirled around, facing him.

112

crowsplash looked both disgusted and enraged, lips drawn back into a snarl.

113

"i saw you eat fawnpaw." his voice shook.

114

"i can only assume you did the same to poor seedkit."

115

before i could react, he leapt forward, claws extended.

116

"*traitor!*"

117

he tore into my face, ripping up my shoulders and flanks.

118

i cried out in pain, but he only kept tearing my body to shreds.

119

i awoke with a startled wail.

120

there were no stars.

trivia

- darkcloud is a black she-cat, closely resembling a devon rex

- she went to the dark forest

- crowsplash told shadowclan of what darkcloud did, but most of his clanmates didn't believe him

- seedkit and fawnpaw went to starclan

- the rogue darkcloud ate as an apprentice died from force of impact after falling from a tree

- while writing this, my cat (willow) was attacking a beetle that got into our house